

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PARM  
SUBJ:AMBASSADOR EARLE'S STATEMENT OF MAY31, 1977  
(SALT TWO - 1200)

THE FOLLOWING IS STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR EARLE  
AT THE SALT TWO MEETING OF MAY 31, 1977.

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR EARLE  
MAY 31, 1977

MR. MINISTER:

I

OUR DELEGATIONS HAVE EXCHANGED VIEWS IN AN ATTEMPT  
TO ARRIVE AT A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY DEFINITION OF

HEAVY BOMBERS IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF ARTICLE II. EXCEPT FOR  
BACKFIRE, THERE IS AGREEMENT ON THE CURRENT TYPES OF  
AIRCRAFT TO BE INCLUDED FOR EACH SIDE. OUR DIFFERENCES

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ON BACKFIRE ARE WELL KNOWN, AND THEY ARE BEING DISCUSSED  
IN ANOTHER FORUM. THERE IS, HOWEVER, ANOTHER DIFFERENCE  
WHICH I BELIEVE CAN BE RESOLVED BY OUR DELEGATIONS. THIS  
DIFFERENCE CENTERS UPON HEAVY BOMBER TYPE AIRCRAFT WHICH  
ARE OR COULD BE USED IN ROLES OTHER THAN THE DELIVERY OF  
STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE WEAPONS.

II

THE UNITED STATES HAS PROPOSED THAT ALL AIRCRAFT OF TYPES AGREED TO BE HEAVY BOMBERS, HOWEVER CONFIGURED, SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE 2400 AGGREGATE. IT IS NOT OUR OBJECTIVE TO INCLUDE IN THAT AGGREGATE ANY AIRCRAFT THAT IS NOT OF A HEAVY BOMBER TYPE OR ANY CURRENT AIRCRAFT WHICH IS OF A HEAVY BOMBER TYPE BUT WHICH, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, CANNOT BE ADAPTED TO HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF A HEAVY BOMBER. ON THE OTHER HAND, AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE OF A HEAVY BOMBER TYPE AND WHICH CAN, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, BE ADAPTED TO HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF A HEAVY BOMBER, MUST NOT BE PERMITTED TO REMAIN OUTSIDE THE AGGREGATE MERELY BECAUSE THEY ARE USED FOR A PURPOSE OTHER THAN THE DELIVERY OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE WEAPONS. THE EXCLUSION OF SUCH AIRCRAFT FROM THE AGGREGATE WOULD UNDERMINE THE PURPOSE OF EQUAL AGGREGATES BY CREATING AN IMBALANCE IN THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS. THESE AIRCRAFT WOULD HAVE A POTENTIAL STRATEGIC CAPABILITY THEMSELVES, AND THEIR EXCLUSION WOULD PERMIT OTHER STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS TO TAKE THEIR PLACE IN THE AGGREGATE. NEITHER SIDE SHOULD BE GIVEN SUCH AN ADVANTAGE, AND THE UNITED STATES, FOR ITS PART, IS PREPARED TO INCLUDE IN THE AGGREGATE ALL OF ITS AIRCRAFT OF A HEAVY BOMBER TYPE, HOWEVER CONFIGURED.

THE UNITED STATES POSITION IS THAT THOSE TUPOLEV (BEAR) AND MYASISHCHEV (BISON) TYPE AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE UTILIZED AS TANKER, RECONNAISSANCE OR ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE AIRCRAFT, EVEN IF RECOGNIZABLE AS SUCH, WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE 2400 AGGREGATE UNLESS TWO CONDITIONS ARE MET. FIRST, THE AIR-  
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CRAFT WOULD HAVE TO BE SUCH THAT THEY COULD NOT, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, BE ADAPTED TO HAVE THE CAPABILITY OF A HEAVY BOMBER. SECOND, THE FACT THAT THEY COULD NOT BE SO ADAPTED WOULD HAVE TO BE ADEQUATELY VERIFIABLE.

WITH REGARD TO THE FIRST CONDITION, THE SOVIET DELEGATION HAD INDICATED THAT THESE AIRCRAFT COULD NOT, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, BE ADAPTED FOR THE DELIVERY OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE WEAPONS. HOWEVER, EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THIS CONTENTION HAS NOT BEEN PROVIDED. FOR INSTANCE, WE ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT THE MYASISHCHEV (BISON) TYPE AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE USED AS TANKERS CANNOT BE ADAPTED QUICKLY AND EASILY FOR THE DELIVERY OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE WEAPONS.

AS FOR THE SECOND CONDITION, THE SOVIET DELEGATION MAINTAINS THAT NATIONAL TECHNICAL MEANS WILL ENSURE THAT A CLEAR DISTINCTION CAN BE DRAWN BETWEEN THOSE AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE HEAVY BOMBERS AND THOSE WHICH ARE TANKERS,

RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT, OR ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE AIRCRAFT. BASED ON OUR CURRENT KNOWLEDGE OF SOVIET AIRCRAFT, THE UNITED STATES IS UNABLE TO DISTINGUISH IN ALL CASES BY NATIONAL TECHNICAL MEANS BETWEEN HEAVY BOMBER TYPE AIRCRAFT CONFIGURED AS HEAVY BOMBERS AND THOSE CONFIGURED FOR OTHER ROLES. HOWEVER, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER OR NOT WE CAN MAKE SUCH A DISTINCTION, PRESENTLY AVAILABLE EVIDENCE DOES NOT ENABLE US TO VERIFY THAT AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE OF A TYPE DESIGNATED AS HEAVY BOMBERS BUT USED AS TANKER, RECONNAISSANCE, OR ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE AIRCRAFT CANNOT, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, BE CONVERTED TO A HEAVY BOMBER CONFIGURATION.

IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE, WE HAVE REQUESTED INFORMATION WHICH WOULD SUPPORT: ONE, THE SOVIET CONTENTION THAT THE TUPOLEV (BEAR) AND MYASISHCHEV (BISON) TYPE AIRCRAFT WHICH ARE UTILIZED AS HEAVY BOMBERS  
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ARE READILY DISTINGUISHABLE BY NATIONAL TECHNICAL MEANS FROM TANKER, RECONNAISSANCE AND ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE VARIANTS OF THESE AIRCRAFT AND; TWO, THE SOVIET CONTENTION THAT CONVERSION OF ANY OF THESE VARIANTS TO A HEAVY BOMBER WOULD REQUIRE A SUBSTANTIAL PERIOD OF TIME. THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION RECOGNIZES THAT DISTINGUISHABILITY AND CONVERTIBILITY OF THE THREE VARIANTS MAY DIFFER. WE WOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER ANY SUCH INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT HELP RESOLVE THIS ISSUE.

I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING YOUR FURTHER VIEWS IN THIS MATTER. EARLE

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